

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

In the Claims:

1. (Original) An isolated mutant *Ophiostoma* species having enhanced protein excretion capability as compared with its parent strain cultured under similar conditions.
2. (Original) The mutant according to claim 1 wherein the *Ophiostoma* species is *Ophiostoma floccosum*.
3. (Original) The mutant according to claim 2 selected from the group consisting of mutant strains J2026MQ.1.1, J2026MQ.1.2, J2026MQ.2.1, J2026MQ.3.1, J2026MQ.4.1, J2026MQ.5.1 and J2026MQ.5.5, as herein defined.
4. (Original) The mutant according to claim 2 selected from the group consisting of deposit accession numbers NM04/42878, NM04/42879, NM04/42880, NM04/42881, their progeny, and mutants thereof.
5. (Currently amended) The mutant according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 4~~ capable of receiving and harbouring an expression vector and producing a recombinant product.
6. (Currently amended) The mutant according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 5~~ wherein the protein is an enzyme.
7. (Original) The mutant according to claim 6 wherein the enzyme is selected from the group consisting of protease, amylase, lipase, glucoamylase, β -galactosidase and β -glucosidase.
8. (Original) A mutant *Ophiostoma* species is characterised by:
 - one nucleus per conidium/blastospore;
 - conidia having mean spore size no less than about 2-3 μ m in diameter; and
 - capable of secreting at least about two times more of a selected protein into culture medium when compared to the secretion of the parent strain grown under similar conditions.
9. (Original) The mutant according to claim 8 capable of secreting at least about three times more of a selected protein when compared to the secretion of the parent strain grown under similar conditions.
10. (Currently amended) The mutant according to claim ~~8 or~~ 9 wherein the selected protein is a proteinase.
11. (Currently amended) A method to provide microbial production or action in an industrial process selected from the group consisting of pulping, bleaching and recombinant protein production, the method comprising: ~~Use of a modified fungal~~
 - (a) providing an isolated mutant *Ophiostoma* species according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1; and

- (b) using the protein excreted by the mutant *Ophiostoma* species in the industrial process. ~~to 10 in an industrial process selected from the group consisting of pulping, bleaching and recombinant protein production.~~
12. (New) A method to provide microbial production or action in an industrial process selected from the group consisting of pulping, bleaching and recombinant protein production, the method comprising:
- (a) providing a mutant *Ophiostoma* species according to claim 8; and
 - (b) using the selected protein excreted by the mutant *Ophiostoma* species in the industrial process.
13. (New) The method of claim 11 wherein the protein is an enzyme.

Please charge any additional deficiencies or credit any overpayments to deposit account number 12-0913 with reference to our docket number (36180 -103011).

Respectfully submitted,



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